

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Action (Alternative I, the preferred alternative), Construction and Operation of the NBACC Facility by DHS at Fort Detrick, Maryland on a Site Adjacent to Existing USAMRIID Facilities, is the option that best suits the needs of DHS. The construction and operational phases of the project will have no significant, non-mitigable, adverse environmental impacts and will result in negligible to minor risks to health and safety of the public and the workforce. None of the alternatives examined in the EIS, including the No Action Alternative, would be better suited to the needs of DHS.

Two reasonable alternatives have been identified and were evaluated in this EIS. These include: Construction and Operation of the NBACC Facility by DHS at Fort Detrick, Maryland on a Site Adjacent to Existing USAMRIID Facilities (Alternative I, the preferred alternative), and No Action (Alternative II). Environmental impacts associated with the preferred alternatives were evaluated in detail and found to be negligible to minor, and mitigable (see Section 5.3).

Under Alternative II, the No Action Alternative, the proposed NBACC Facility would not be constructed and operated. This would eliminate the negligible to minor environmental impacts associated with Alternative I, but it would not address the needs of DHS for the NBACC Facility.

Although options to locate the NBACC Facility on an alternate site at Fort Detrick (Alternative III) were also considered early on during the development of the EIS, this is not consistent with Fort Detrick land use planning. Moreover, in comparison to the selected action it would be more distant from the existing USAMRIID facilities and the NIH IRF now under construction, and therefore, less favorable for utilization of existing infrastructure and for synergy among personnel of the three agencies. Alternatives that would involve locating the NBACC Facility on a site outside of Fort Detrick, either on existing government-owned property (Alternative IV) or on currently privately-owned property (Alternative V), were eliminated from detailed evaluation in the EIS during the scoping process. It would be contrary to congressional intent for the laboratory to be built outside Fort Detrick. Furthermore, it may require costly land acquisition and infrastructure development that could delay completion of the NBACC Facility by several years.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated for implementation of the Proposed Action. During the construction phase, negligible to minor impacts are expected for land use (land disturbance and other construction damage), noise, and transportation (increased traffic and parking demand), geology (potential sinkhole formation), plant and animal ecology, air quality (fugitive dust and vehicular emissions), odors, energy resources, pollution prevention/ waste management, and occupational health and safety (work-related injuries). Mitigation for the potential adverse impacts will include compliance with regulatory requirements (forestation requirements and OSHA regulations) and adherence to BMPs and DHS contract requirements. Minor positive impacts on the socioeconomic environment are anticipated (local economy).

During the operational phase, significant positive impacts to public health and safety are anticipated from NBACC accomplishing its mission and minor positive impacts are anticipated for the socioeconomic environment (local economy). Minor adverse impacts are expected for transportation (traffic and parking demand), and negligible to minor impacts are expected for geology (potential pathways for groundwater contamination), water resources (groundwater

recharge, stormwater management, sedimentation in surface waters, and drinking water supply), plant and animal ecology (displacement of deer and/or bird species), air quality (increased pollutant emissions), odors, energy resources (increased consumption), and pollution prevention/waste management.

In addition, possible adverse health and safety impacts on laboratory workers in the proposed NBACC Facility and on nearby residents during the operational phase of the project were identified and evaluated. The risks were deemed to be negligible, and mitigable through adherence to *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories* (BMBL) and other standards for safe operational practices.

The principal conclusions of this EIS are: (1) Implementation of the Proposed Action (Alternative I, Construction and Operation of the NBACC Facility by DHS at Fort Detrick, Maryland, on a Site Adjacent to Existing USAMRIID Facilities) will result in no significant adverse environmental, socioeconomic, or human health impacts related to the construction phase or the operational phase of the project. (2) Implementation of the Proposed Action will be a crucial step in addressing a national shortage of such facilities. (3) Implementation of Alternative II (No Action) would eliminate the negligible to minor environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action, but it would not address the needs of DHS for the NBACC Facility.